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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 2171  
INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC  
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RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL KOLKATA 2655

UNCLAS KOLKATA 000299

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PHUM](#) [ELTN](#) [PGOV](#) [ASEC](#) [CASC](#) [SOCI](#) [IN](#)

SUBJECT: BIHAR AND JHARKHAND RESPOND TO MAHARASHTRA VIOLENCE

REF: A. MUMBAI 505

[1](#)B. MUMBAI 513

[1](#)1. (SBU) Summary: From October 21-25, students vandalized railway cars and stations in Bihar. The violence was in response to Raj Thackeray's Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) activists' attacks on north Indian Hindi-speaking job aspirants at railway recruitment centers in Maharashtra on October 19. Students called a one-day general strike in Bihar on October 25 alleging that MNS activists killed a Bihari railway candidate during the attack. CM Nitish Kumar sought Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's intervention in the matter. Violence has subsided and train services have returned to normal. End summary.

[1](#)2. (SBU) From October 21-25, Bihari students attacked train cars and railway stations throughout Bihar, causing train services to be cancelled between Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal. According to the Additional Director General of Police in Bihar Anil Sinha, protesters targeted Patna, Jehanabad, Barh, Khusrupur, Fatuha, Saharsa, Ara, Sasaram, Purnia and Bhagalpur railway stations. According to contacts, students attacked railway stations in order draw media attention for their protest against attacks by activists of Raj Thackeray's Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) on Bihari candidates at a railway recruitment exam center in suburban Mumbai (Reftel B). According to Sinha, Bihar police detained over one thousand students. He confirmed that the police used gunfire and baton charges to disperse the protesters in Sasaram where a railway track was blocked.

[1](#)3. (SBU) Sources in the Indian Railways from Patna informed PolFSN that all railway passengers were safe since they were allowed to disembark before the train cars were set fire. Students held a one-day strike on October 25, but since then there has not been any significant violence. Train services between Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal returned to normal on October 26. Several students have filed criminal cases with the Bihar police against MNS chief Raj Thackeray.

[1](#)4. (U) Special Secretary in Bihar's Home department informed PolFSN that Bihar CM Nitish Kumar held several meetings with senior government officials and political parties seeking their help to control the growing dissent and violent mood of the Bihari students. CM Kumar also appealed to the people of Bihar, particularly students, to maintain peace. The official added that CM Nitish Kumar has also sought Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's intervention in the matter.

[1](#)5. (SBU) In the neighboring state of Jharkhand, the Bharatiya Bhojpuri Sangh (BBS) of Jharkhand launched a campaign against the Maharashtrians in the state. According to the General Manager of Tata Motors, on October 22 BBS activists vandalized the official residence of S.B. Borwankar, the head of the Tata Motors plant in Jamshedpur. S.B. Borwankar is originally from

the state of Maharashtra. Sources in Tata Motors informed PolFSN that no one was injured and suspected that the incident was staged to highlight the issue of regionalism in the newspapers. Jharkhand police have arrested two BBS activists.

PAYNE